

## **The National Center for PTSD**

### **Supporting our Troops in the War in Iraq**

The National Center set three tasks for itself in the early days of the Iraq War: gather the best information available and disseminate it to as many clinicians at as many locations as quickly as possible; provide training and ongoing support to those clinicians and others on the front lines; and learn from the experiences in order to broaden the understanding of PTSD for the future.

#### **Getting the word out: The Iraq War Clinician Guide**

National Center personnel, in collaboration with the Department of Psychiatry at Walter Reed Army Medical Center quickly developed and revised the Iraq War Clinician Guide and posted it on the Center's website ([www.ncptsd.org](http://www.ncptsd.org)). The Guide contains a wide range of information, including assessment guidelines; treatment of the returning Iraq War veteran; treatment of medical casualty evacuees; military sexual trauma; traumatic grief; and educational materials for veterans and their families. The intent was to help VA and DoD providers understand the unique circumstances of the current war, and to prepare them to handle casualties that entered the VA system.

#### **Training and support: Consulting with active duty military**

As a leader in the development of treatments for PTSD, the National Center almost immediately began receiving requests for help from mental health practitioners in the military. This has included training on preparation and treatment for DoD practitioners at Ft. Bragg, Ft. Drum, Ft. Stewart, Camp Pendleton and Andrews Air Force Base.

The ongoing collaboration with the Navy and Marines on the West Coast will culminate in a two conferences scheduled for early 2005 – one dealing with the complex network of military providers and the other dealing with evaluation and consensus on best practices in treatment. Plans

for collaboration have also recently been initiated with Scofield Army Barracks and Tripler Army Hospital, both in Hawaii.

### **Learning for the future: Research on resilience**

Center professionals are hoping to learn from the experiences in the Iraq war, gathering information that will inform future research programs and, hopefully, continue to improve care for the nation's veterans. This includes information on the effectiveness of different interventions; assessment data before deployment and again upon return to the states, giving researchers insights into individuals' ability to withstand the stresses of active duty; and ongoing research on resilience conducted for the past five years with troops at the Military Survival Training school at Fort Bragg, to understand the biological and psychosocial factors that distinguish recruits who perform well under high-stress conditions.